



## PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF WOMEN'S HIGHER EDUCATION (CASE STUDY IN BATU PUTIH VILLAGE)

Jasair<sup>1</sup>, Endah Andayani<sup>2</sup>, Lilik Sri Hariani<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1,2,3</sup>Master of Social Education Program, PGRI University of Kanjuruhan Malang

<sup>1</sup>[jasair84@gmail.com](mailto:jasair84@gmail.com)

<sup>2</sup>[endahandayani@unikama.ac.id](mailto:endahandayani@unikama.ac.id)

<sup>3</sup>[liliksr Hariani@unikama.ac.id](mailto:liliksr Hariani@unikama.ac.id)

### *Abstract*

This study aims to determine the Public Perception of the Importance of Higher Education for Women Case Study in Batu Putih Village, Sekotong District, West Lombok Regency. The research method used is a qualitative descriptive research method. The type of research used in this research is a phenomenological research type because this research is categorized as a case study research. This research is located in Batu Putih Village, Sekotong District, West Lombok Regency with the research subjects being the Batu Putih Village community, Community Leaders and the general public. The data collection technique is in the form of primary data by means of open observation, interviews and direct observation. While the secondary data sources in this study are written data in the form of livelihood data, education level, and educational institutions in Batu Putih Village. Data analysis in the study was carried out using qualitative analysis. The results of this study explain that women who continue their education to a higher level are fewer, when compared to men in Batu Putih village because there are several public perceptions about the importance or unimportance of higher education for women. Then some of these public perceptions are as follows. First, higher education for women is important. Second, higher education for women is important, but education is not the main priority for women. Third, higher education for women is sufficient only to be able to read and write. Fourth, higher education for women is not important because women's duties are as housewives.

**Keywords:** *Community Perceptions, Higher Education, and Women*

### INTRODUCTION

Higher education is one of the important pillars in the development of quality human resources. For women, higher education not only functions as a means of increasing knowledge and skills, but also as an empowerment tool that can improve the well-being of individuals and society as a whole. However, despite the increase in women's access to higher education in various countries, including Indonesia, there are still a number of challenges and obstacles that need to be overcome, especially in rural areas (Garcia & Lopez, 2019).

In many villages in Indonesia, including Batu Putih Village, there are various public perceptions that affect women's access to higher education. The people in this village often have a traditional view that tends to see women as figures whose roles are more

dominant in the household. Women's domestic role is more emphasized in the local culture leading to doubts about the importance of women pursuing higher education. This view can limit women's opportunities to develop themselves and contribute more broadly beyond the family (Dewi & Nugraheni, 2024).

In addition, the social norms that apply in Batu Putih Village also help shape the community's perception of women's higher education. Many families in this village prefer that their daughters marry at a young age rather than continue their education to a higher level. This is due to the assumption that the main role of women is to be a good wife and mother, not as an individual who has a career or higher education. This perception reinforces gender stereotypes that can limit women's potential to contribute in the professional field.

Economic factors also play a significant role in family decisions to support or not support higher education for women. In Batu Putih Village, many families have low incomes and consider education as a heavy financial burden. In situations like these, families often prefer to allocate limited resources to the education of boys, which is considered more likely to support the family's economy in the future. As a result, women are often overlooked in terms of access to higher education (Patel & Singh, 2018).

The influence of religion also cannot be ignored in shaping public perception of higher education for women. In Batu Putih Village, religious teachings are often used as the basis for decision-making related to girls' education. Some interpretations of religion may favor women's education, but there are also interpretations that emphasize women's domestic roles and view higher education as something less important. This can affect the attitude of families and communities in providing support for women's education (Sari & Nugroho, 2019).

The impact of women's limited access to higher education in Batu Putih Village can be seen from the low level of women's participation in various sectors, be it in the economic, political, and social fields. Women who do not have higher education tend to have limited access to decent and high-income jobs. In addition, women's low participation in higher education can also reduce their ability to play an active role in decision-making at the family and community level (Indrawati & Santoso, 2021).

However, there are several success stories of women in Batu Putih Village who have managed to achieve higher education and contribute significantly to the community. These stories can be an inspiration and proof that higher education for women is not only beneficial for individuals, but also for society as a whole. However, this success story is still an exception and not enough to change the perception of society as a whole.

The government and various educational institutions have made various efforts to improve women's access to higher education, including providing scholarships and affirmation programs. However, cultural and structural challenges in villages such as Batu

Putih require a more comprehensive and sustainable approach. This approach should include education on gender equality, economic empowerment, and strengthening social support for women (Amalia & Susanto, 2020).

Education about gender equality is an important step to change public perception of the role of women in the family and society. By understanding that women have the same right to higher education and careers, society is expected to provide greater support for women to continue their education. This education is also important to reduce gender stereotypes that are still widely believed by the community.

In addition, economic empowerment for families in villages such as Batu Putih is very important to increase women's access to higher education. By improving the economic condition of the family, the financial burden that is often the main reason for not continuing education can be reduced. Women-focused economic empowerment programs can also help them to become financially independent and support their children's education in the future.

Strengthening social support is also needed to create an environment that supports higher education for women. Support from family, friends, and the community is essential to ensure that women feel supported in their pursuit of education. In addition, the role of religious leaders and community leaders in encouraging women's education is also very important, because they have a great influence in shaping public perceptions (Chen & Wang, 2022).

Although these challenges are quite complex, there is hope that with coordinated efforts from various parties, women's access to higher education in Batu Putih Village can be improved. Further research is needed to understand the social and cultural dynamics that affect people's perceptions of women's higher education, as well as to identify the most effective strategies to overcome these barriers.

By overcoming this limiting perception, women in Batu Putih Village will have a greater opportunity to develop their potential to the fullest. Higher education can open doors for them to contribute more to society, not

only in traditional roles, but also as leaders, professionals, and agents of change. Finally, people who support higher education for women will see significant benefits, both in terms of economic welfare, health, and social stability (Ramadhani & Wahyuni, 2022).

This study seeks to explore the perception of the community in Batu Putih Village towards women's higher education, identify the factors that affect this perception, and provide policy recommendations that can increase women's access to higher education. Thus, it is hoped that the results of this study can make a meaningful contribution to women's empowerment efforts in rural areas.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses qualitative data. Meanwhile, the approach used in this study is a qualitative approach. According to Bogdan and Taylor, qualitative research is a research procedure that later produces descriptive data in the form of words or orals that come from the person being researched.

The type of research used in the research that has been carried out is a type of phenomenological research because this study is categorized as a case study research. Case study research is a form of in-depth or focused research on aspects of the social environment, including the human beings in it.

This researcher describes or expresses the meaning of the concept or phenomenon of experience based on the consciousness that occurs in the individual. In addition, this research is carried out in a natural situation so that there are no limits to interpreting or understanding the phenomenon being studied.

In the implementation of this case study research, the researcher chose Batu Putih Village, Sekotong District, as the research location. This research will also be carried out for 3 months, starting from May 2 to July 30, 2023. This location was chosen by the researcher, because in this village the community still does not know the importance of education for women. This is intended to obtain general and accurate data, so that maximum results can be achieved. This also needs to be the focus of discussion on public perception of women who continue their education at the university level.

The data collection technique is divided into two, including primary data and secondary data. Primary data are in the form of observations, structured interviews, and documentation. Primary data itself is the core data in this case which is used as primary data by researchers, including: Village Head, Hamlet Head, two educational figures, one religious leader, one parent, 5 female community junior high school graduates, 5 high school graduates. So that the number of respondents is 17 people in Batu Putih Village, Sekotong District, West Lombok Regency. Meanwhile, in secondary data, the main data source is in the form of written data. In this secondary data, the researcher uses data sources related to livelihoods, education levels, and educational institutions of the population in Batu Putih Village, Gerung District, West Lombok Regency.

Data analysis techniques are also closely related to data collection methods, namely observation and interviews or *focus group discussions*. Thus, data collection is carried out by interviews and observations through the tradition of data analysis techniques. In this study, the researcher used a data analysis technique proposed by Miles and Huberman. There are several steps that can be taken in analyzing data according to Miles and Huberman, including:

- a. Reducing data, The data obtained by researchers from research in the field is getting more and more complicated day by day. For this reason, it is necessary to immediately conduct data analysis through data reduction. Thus, the reduced data will provide a clearer picture, and make it easier for researchers to collect data later,
- b. Data presentation or data model, in this study data presentation is an act of presenting data from observations and interviews that have been recorded and have been written in the form of writing points from the results of the data presentation then it is concluded that there is data findings from the two data so that it is able to answer the problems in this study,
- c. Drawing conclusions, conclusions in qualitative research may be able to answer the focus of research formulated from the beginning, but it may not, because as has been stated, the problems and focus of

research in qualitative research are still temporary and will develop after the research is in the field. In addition, the conclusion drawn in this study will be carried out by comparing the data obtained, namely data from the results Observation and interviews, then the data is analyzed inductively, namely by describing events or data that are specific and then concluding in the form of general data.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**Result**

**Table 1. Number of Residents of Batu Putih Village**

No	Hamlet Name	Male	Woman	Sum
1	Labuan Poh Hamlet	1.195	1.217	2.312
2	Nusa Sari Hamlet	628	788	1.416
3	Ketapang Hamlet	153	161	314
4	Mekar Sari Hamlet	474	550	1.024
5	Siung Hamlet	377	464	841
6	Berambang Hamlet	278	319	597
7	Tibu Baru Hamlet	200	209	409
8	Labuan Poh Timur hamlet	329	355	684
<i>Jumlah</i>		<b>3.634</b>	<b>4.063</b>	<b>7.597</b>

**Livelihood of Batu Putih Village**

The residents of Batu Putih Village 50% of the population are engaged in agriculture, both as farmers and farm laborers so that the rural atmosphere is so very thick, which has such a high level of solidarity. Apart from being farmers, the livelihood of the people of Batu Putih Village is also 30% as fishermen because Batu Putih Village is also not far from the coast. The remaining 20% earn a living as traders and Civil Servants (PNS).

**Exposure to Research data**

In this chapter, several things related to research data and findings will be explained. The data and findings related to the research that has been carried out include the following.

**Number of Residents of Batu Putih Village**

Batu Putih Village is one of the villages in Sekotong District, which has a relatively dense population of 7,597 consisting of 3,634 men and 4,063 women. Furthermore, the number of residents in each hamlet in Batu Putih Village can be seen in the table below.

Most of the residents of Batu Putih Village are classified as having never received a variety of education, among them there are those who have not graduated from elementary, junior high, high school, and university, residents who have a livelihood as farmers or farm laborers, their education on average most of them have not graduated from elementary school. For more details about the education level of the Batu Putih Village community, please see the following table:

**Table 2. Education Level of Batu Putih Village Community**

No	Education	Male	Woman
1	Age 3-6 years old has not entered kindergarten	85	103
2	Age 3-6 years old entering kindergarten	43	35
3	Ages 7-18 who have never gone to school	27	64
4	7-18 years old who are in school	76	18
5	Age 18-56 years old who have gone to school	27	134
6	Age 18-56 years old who have been in elementary school but did not finish	10	37
7	Age 18-56 years old, graduated from elementary school or equivalent	75	32

8	Age 12-52 years old who have not completed junior high school	15	45
9	Age 18-56 years old who have not completed high school	36	76
10	Graduated from junior high school equivalent	86	47
11	Graduated from high school equivalent	70	42
12	Finish D3	10	4
13	Finish SI	20	8

The table above shows how the state of women's education has clearly seen a gap in obtaining education. Where education, especially formal education, is more dominated by men, this is clearly seen from the table above where women who have the same level of education as men to a higher level or level of education, are very few

compared to men. It shows how the interest of parents to provide formal education to their children or especially their daughters is very lacking. Due to the awareness of parents towards the formal education of their children, especially girls, we can see this from the data below:

**Table 3. Those who are studying**

No	Education	Male	Woman
1	Age 3-6 years who are in kindergarten	21	19
2	Ages 7-11 years old who are in elementary school	105	97
3	Age 11-14 years old who are in junior high school	78	45
4	14-19 years old who are in high school	65	25
5	Age 19-25 years who are currently entering a university or college	27	13

The table above shows the situation of men and women who are studying from elementary to tertiary level in Batu Putih village. Furthermore, the table shows that there is a gap between women and men in obtaining education. Where those who are studying are

more dominated by men, while women who are studying are less.

Furthermore, educational institutions from elementary to high school levels in Batu Putih Village totaling 11 educational institutions, we can see this from the data below:

**Table 4. Formal Education Institutions in Batu Putih Village**

No	Institution	Sum
1	TK/RA	4
2	SD/MI	5
3	SMP/TSANAWIYAH	2
4	SMA/ALIYAH	1
<i>Jumlah</i>		<b>11</b>

**Beliefs (Religion), Batu Putih Village Community**

In terms of population, Batu Putih Village is classified as a very dense village, which amounts to approximately 7,013 people with a total of 1,783 heads of families. Batu Putih Village has most of its residents adhering to Islam and a small part adhering to

Hinduism. Thus the efforts made by the residents of Batu Putih Village to gather and enliven Islamic teachings, especially in terms of religion and the recitation of the Qur'an, are relatively high, it is very visible in various aspects of welcoming religious holidays where all the people of Batu Putih Village are so enthusiastic that almost all people have their

own role in society, both from youth leaders, religious leaders, and community leaders, even more so the Batu Putih Village government itself. Religious norms are so strongly held by the people of Batu Putih Village, it can be seen from how parents provide a level of awareness to their children in behavior. Community life and parents strongly emphasize providing religious education to every family activity, especially to their children.

### **Research Findings**

Research that has been carried out in Batu Putih Village, Sekotong District, West Lombok Regency has produced several findings. The results of the researcher's findings include the following.

### **Public Perception of Education in Batu Putih Village**

Perception is a person's perspective on an object that is seen, observed, felt, and so on. A person's perception of an object can be different, especially in terms of women's education. This can be seen from the results of the interviews conducted, that there are several public perceptions in seeing the importance and absence of higher education for women in Batu Putih Village. There are several public perceptions about the importance of women's education in Batu Putih Village, including the following:

### **Women's education is important, but education is not a top priority for women**

We know that everyone must need education in life, because it is with education that people can live a good life. At least everyone living in the world has an education, however, education for women is sometimes considered important or even not considered important for every society. As happened in Batu Putih Village, there are several people who view education for women as important, but we as women are not the main priority. This is certainly based on the reason that the community has such a view.

From this assumption, it was strengthened by the results of an interview with Mr. Fajrin S.Pd (48 years old), as the head of Batu Putih Village. The results of the interview are as follows:

"I personally view education as important for women to live their lives. Everyone if their life wants to be directed, of course, they must have an education. However, in some places in our

village, some people consider higher education for women not to be a top priority that is considered the most important so that women forget their nature. If women are given the opportunity to go to college, it is even better, but at least women are given the opportunity".

In the second interview conducted by the women's community who only graduated from junior high school, Salwa Hayati (30 years old), expressed her views on higher education for women as follows:

"In my opinion, higher education for women is very important, because if we go to high school, it is not only up to junior high school. Of course we will be respected and not underestimated. But what costs us for school is our parents. so if my parents can only send me to school until I graduate from junior high school, I can only be grateful."

From the results of some interviews that have been conducted as above with several circles of society, we can conclude that public perception of higher education for women is indeed considered important. However, higher education for women does not have to be a top priority, because the people of Batu Putih Village, Sekotong District, West Lombok Regency consider that if women continue their higher education, they may forget their nature as women. However, women must be given equal opportunities to obtain education.

### **Women's Education Is Only Limited to Being Able to Read and Write**

In the fact that many things happen in society is still low education, especially for women. Education for women is still considered the 2nd grade portion, where people think that those who need the highest education are only men. Many people in Batu Putih Village still think and view women's education as only limited to being able to read and write.

In this case, the results of the interview that support the discussion, Fatmah's mother (36 years old) will reveal it as follows:

"The school is for children to be able to read and write, so I send my daughters to school until they graduate from junior high school only because women are worried that later the association will be damaged and girls will not be able to take care of themselves if the school is far away and the school is high. So I think if

you can read and write, it's enough for girls to go to school."

To strengthen the above opinion, the researcher explained the results of an interview conducted with the Head of Mekar Sari Hamlet, Batu Putih Village, namely with Mr. Haji Salman (54 years old). The results of the interview are as follows:

"In my opinion, women are better at home so that their association does not become damaged. Indeed, the obligation of parents to provide education for their children is the same, but if later the girls of the high school then bring slander, eat sinful meals, we as parents will also be enough, so it is enough for us as parents to send girls to school by being able to read and write. Because maintaining dignity and good name is the most important thing".

From the results of several interviews that have been conducted as above with several circles of society, we can conclude that the public's perspective on girls' higher education is still very primitive and traditional. People are more worried if they send girls to higher levels of education. The people of Batu Putih Village consider that girls do not have to have higher education, as far as being able to read and write is extraordinary, even though by having a high education, there is still a lot that women can do with the education they have.

#### **Women's Education Is Not Important because Women's Duty is as a Housewife**

Becoming a housewife will certainly be experienced for every woman and many more tasks that will be carried out by women. Among the duties of women after marriage are such as taking care of children, husbands, taking care of the household and so on. Therefore, even though women are highly educated, if they have a family, one of their main duties is to take care of children and husbands. These things are the perception that higher education for women is not important because it is caused by the role and main task of women is to be housewives.

In this case, the results of the interview were obtained that supported the discussion. Mr. Sahmat (40 years old) is one of the parents who only sends their children to school as junior high school graduates will reveal it as follows:

"No matter how high a girl wants to be in school, in the end she will get married and become a housewife, whose job is to take care of children, husbands, and homes. So why continue girls to high school. Girls don't need to go to college, because even if they are smart, they won't have the same position as you guys. As long as you can cook rice, make chili sauce, and can maintain the house, you can serve your husband".

In order to support Mr. Sahmat's answer, the researcher also explained the results of an interview conducted with Mrs. Sakmah (35 years old) 'a community of women who are only junior high school graduates', in this case she revealed the following:

"For me, education is necessary so that we do not fall behind with the increasingly advanced times. However, my parents think that I don't need to go to school too high because later if we get married, we women will only have higher education, then we will be relied on to work automatically, we women. Meanwhile, if we are married, we women have to take care of the house, take care of Ramadan children, prepare the needs of children and husbands".

From the above explanation, it can be seen that the community views women's need for higher education as not considered important because society thinks that every woman will be a housewife so that with that perception education becomes not important for women.

#### **Factors Affecting Public Perception of Women's Higher Education in Batu Putih Village**

The community's perception of women's higher education in Batu Putih Village is influenced by several factors. Among the factors that affect this perception include the following.

##### **Economic Factors**

Economics is one thing that must support when someone has an ideal education or reaches higher education, of course, family economic factors also have an influence, how we see the role and function of parents towards their children, of course everyone is aware of the importance of an education. However, due to the unsupportive economic situation, that is why many women in Batu Putih Village do not continue to higher levels.

In this case, the researcher explained the results of his interview with Mr. Mahyudin (57 years old), one of the speakers, following the results of the interview:

"Our willingness to provide education to children is very large, but economic factors are not so supportive, why can we only make our abilities up to the junior high school level. But if our sons want to continue their education to a higher level (University), we will try our best who knows with a higher education, they will not follow in our footsteps whose work is only to become ordinary traders".

To strengthen the above opinion, the researcher explained the results of interviews conducted with other sources, namely with Mr. Samsul (55 years old). The results of the interview are as follows:

"I really want to provide education to children up to college, but because of our economic limitations, in the end I only go to college for boys, because I think that if a woman, after all, if she gets married, she will be a dependent of her husband, unlike her son who will be the backbone of the family. And that's why I don't send my daughter to school."

From the results of the interview above, it is explained that economic factors have a big influence in providing education to children. So as to form a priority scale, who will be prioritized in obtaining education to the level of higher education, even though parents have awareness of the importance of education, but due to economic factors, they must distinguish who will be prioritized in obtaining education, especially up to the level of higher education.

#### **Family Factors**

The family factor plays the most role, especially regarding the form of family in Batu Putih Village, in general the form of the family in the community of Batu Putih Village is a form of patriarchal family in which the placement of men is more dominant in all things. This causes women not to have the same access as men because men tend to be more dominant, especially regarding the difference in education levels between men and women in the people of Batu Putih Village

This is strengthened by the results of the researcher's interview with Mr. Irawan (47

Tahunn), one of the resource persons in Batu Putih Village, the following are the results of the interview:

"In my family, there is no distinction between boys and girls in obtaining education, but if we look at in general, every family in Batu Putih Village must prioritize education for their boys, until college, we will obey because it is the boy who will be the head of the family later".

To strengthen the above opinion, the researcher explained the results of interviews conducted with other sources, namely with Mr. Abdullah (68 years old), one of the other sources in Batu Putih Village, following the results of the interview:

"We know for ourselves, the people in the village when it comes to school must prioritize boys over girls. Whether he comes from a well-off family or not, let alone people like us who only make money by working in the rice fields. Even though there are those who send their daughters to college, it is because their sons do not want to continue, which is why girls are sent to college, because parents think that women can cook is enough".

From the results of interviews that have been conducted with several circles of the community, the following conclusions can be drawn: It turns out that what aggravates the public's thinking about the view to limit the education of boys and girls is because of the above factors in accordance with the expressions of several sources, so as to strengthen gender towards children's education in Batu Putih Village, Sekotang District

#### **Female Nature Factors in the Kitchen**

The people in Batu Putih Village still have many who consider the nature of women in the kitchen, no matter how high school girls will end up in the kitchen, this reason makes few women in Batu Putih Village continue to the university level.

The above is strengthened by the results of an interview with Mr. Mahyudin (47 years old), the results of the interview are as follows: "Women, no matter how high their education, should not neglect their main task as a housewife, which is to prepare the needs of their husbands and children. This is the main task of a woman when they are married and this must be prioritized over others because



after her husband comes home from work, a wife has prepared food for her husband".

To strengthen the above opinion, the researcher explained the results of interviews conducted with other sources, namely with Mrs. Desi Fatmawati (32 years old). The results of the interview are as follows:

"We as women after getting married are indeed our duty is to prepare all the needs of our husbands and take care of children. So no matter how high our education is, we will not forget our nature as women, namely cooking in the kitchen where we are in Labuan Poh Hamlet. This is one of the reasons why many women in our hamlet think that school up to junior high school or high school is enough, even though many of them have reached junior high school, it is still rare to continue to the high school level".

From the results of interviews that have been conducted with several circles of the community, the following conclusions can be drawn: some communities in Batu Putih Village above, researchers found that one of the factors that affects the perception of the community regarding women's higher education is that some people in Batu Putih Village consider women to be in the kitchen, taking care of the needs of their husbands and children. That is why some people are not so interested in continuing their daughters' education to a higher level. It is different from boys who continue to be encouraged and facilitated to continue their education to a higher level.

#### **Cultural Factors**

The culture that has been ingrained in society is one of the main factors regarding boys being more important than women, the assumption that people will continue to think that "women don't need to go to high school because they end up in the kitchen". From this factor developed the thought of educated women that, when they graduated from college, they were better off being housewives than working.

This was strengthened by the results of an interview with Mr. H. Subardi (60 years old), as the head of Berambang hamlet. The results of the interview are as follows:

"As long as I was the head of the hamlet. I found that some women who are highly educated actually prefer not to work anymore and stay at home as housewives. They think

that after getting married, the husband is the one who has dependents, so what happens is that many women who have worked after marriage do not work anymore, even not allowed by their husbands, they are asked to focus on taking care of their household and children. If women are allowed to work, then who will take care of their households and children".

To strengthen the above opinion, the researcher explained the results of interviews conducted with other sources, namely with Mardiah's mother (46 years old). The results of the interview are as follows:

"Most people here, higher education for girls is not very important, unlike boys. Parents consider higher education for boys to be a must, because they will be the head of the household who will provide for the family. That is why parents are fighting as much as possible to finance their son's education. As for girls, from the past until now, parents are halfway in fighting for their daughters' education".

From the results of interviews that have been conducted with several circles of society, the following conclusions can be drawn: the cultural factors of the surrounding community that still think that from the past until now women rarely continue their education to a higher level, so that there is a so-called ingrained habit in the midst of society that women are enough to reach the junior high or high school level do not have to continue to the same level higher. Because in the end after getting married, they will stop working and change their profession to become housewives and take care of children.

#### **Family Environmental Factors**

A family history that has been passed down from generation to generation enjoys education as a student so that parents prefer to enlist their children and fear because of negative prejudices about student association makes parents very afraid to allow their children to continue to higher education. One of the hallmarks of our era is technology and freedom in all things. All spoke and invited for freedom.

This is reinforced by the results of the researcher's interview with Mr. Farhan (56 Tahunn), one of the community leaders in

West Berambang Village, the following are the results of the interview:

"This association is what makes parents afraid to send their children to a higher level of education and we are very worried about this as parents who are far from our daughters. Not all, but some of the cases that have occurred so far have traumatized us that the association with those around them when they carry out the process in the high desert is very inversely proportional to when they before continuing to a higher level of education. That is why we as parents tend to enroll our daughters in Islamic boarding schools whose goal is to make their associations directed and not reckless like some other girls in our place".

To strengthen the above opinion, the researcher explained the results of interviews conducted with other sources, namely with Mrs. Fatmah (45 years old), following the results of the interview:

"We as parents are very worried about the change in the character of our daughters. that is why our family agreed that our girls' education is limited to junior high school or high school only, unlike boys we encourage them to have the highest education".

From the results of interviews that have been conducted with several circles of society, the following conclusions can be drawn: the public's perception of the number of women who do not continue to higher ranks is influenced by family environmental factors that consider that girls are enough to go to school until junior high school or high school. They are worried about the association of their daughters so many of them do not support their daughters to continue to a higher level. In fact, not all highly educated women fall into the wrong hole.

### **Discussion**

The community's perception of higher education for women in Batu Putih Village reflects social and cultural dynamics that are still thick with traditional values. Higher education for women is often considered not as important as their domestic roles in the household, such as being good housewives and taking care of the family. This view is reinforced by the social norms that prevail in the village, where women's roles are more often associated with housework and family responsibilities than with academic

achievement or professional careers (Baker & Thompson, 2024).

The people in Batu Putih Village tend to view higher education as something more relevant for men, who are expected to be the main breadwinners. This results in educational priorities often being given to boys, while girls are encouraged to marry and take on the role of housewives. Women who have higher education are often considered incompatible with traditional roles, which can create social pressure for those who choose to continue their education (Yuliana & Setiawan, 2023).

Economic factors also play an important role in limiting women's access to higher education. Many families in Batu Putih Village are low-income, so education is considered a significant financial burden. In this situation, parents tend to invest limited resources in the education of boys, in the hope that they will be able to support the family economically in the future. As a result, women are often overlooked when it comes to access to higher education, which exacerbates gender inequalities in education.

In addition to economic factors, the influence of religion also plays a role in shaping public perception of women's higher education. The religious teachings in Batu Putih Village, which are often interpreted conservatively, reinforce the view that women's roles are more appropriate in the home than in the world of work or education. Although there are interpretations of religion that support education for all, regardless of gender, often traditional understandings that emphasize women's domestic roles dominate. This strengthens the public's view that higher education for women is not important.

One of the impacts of women's limited access to higher education is their low participation in various sectors, both economic, social, and political. Women who do not have higher education tend to have limited access to low-income jobs and have less opportunities to be involved in important decision-making, both at the family and community levels. This not only harms individual women, but also hinders the development of society as a whole (Martinez & Rodriguez, 2023).

However, it is important to note that there are women in Batu Putih Village who

have successfully pursued higher education and contributed significantly in various fields. These success stories show that educated women can bring about positive change, not only for themselves but also for society. Those who succeed often have to face various challenges economically, socially, and culturally, but the perseverance and support they receive allow them to overcome these obstacles.

Efforts by the government and educational institutions to improve women's access to higher education have been made, such as through scholarship and affirmation programs. However, this approach is often less effective in villages like Batu Putih because it does not take into account complex social and cultural factors. These programs need to be complemented by a more comprehensive approach, including education on gender equality and economic empowerment that involves all members of the community (Putri & Aisyah, 2018).

Education about gender equality is very important to change people's views on the role of women. Through continuous education, it is hoped that the community can understand that women have the same right to higher education and careers, and that education is not only beneficial for individuals but also for families and society as a whole.

The program should include all levels of society, including men, to ensure that a change in perception occurs not only in women but also in the entire community (Brown & Miller, 2020).

In addition, economic empowerment for families in villages such as Batu Putih is also a crucial step. By increasing the economic independence of families, the financial burden that is often the main barrier to continuing higher education can be reduced. Women-focused economic empowerment programs can also help them become more financially independent and provide support for their children's education in the future. This will reinforce the argument that higher education is a worthwhile investment, not only for men but also for women.

Strong social support is also needed to create an environment that supports higher education for women. Support from family, friends, and community is essential for women

to feel supported in their pursuit of education. In addition, religious leaders and community leaders have an important role in encouraging changes in public perception. With the support of these respected figures, society may be more likely to accept that higher education for women is something important and worth fighting for (Davis & Williams, 2021).

Integrating gender education and economic empowerment in community programs can also help address gender stereotypes that are still strong in Batu Putih Village. This education will not only provide knowledge, but also build awareness about the importance of gender equality in all aspects of life, including education. In this way, women will be more courageous to pursue higher education, and society will be more supportive of the decision.

Strengthening the role of women who have been successful in achieving higher education can also be an effective tool to drive change. These inspiring stories can be used as role models for young women in Batu Putih Village, showing that higher education can open up wider opportunities and bring great benefits to them and the community. This mentoring program involving successful women can help young women in facing challenges they may encounter in their educational journey (Widodo & Kartika, 2018).

The government and educational institutions also need to continue to monitor and evaluate the programs that have been implemented to ensure their effectiveness. Continuous evaluation allows for the identification of problems that may arise during the implementation of the program and provides an opportunity to adjust the strategies used. In this way, these programs can be more effective in achieving the goal of increasing women's participation in higher education (Smith & Johnson, 2019).

Through an integrated and sustainable approach, it is hoped that women's access to higher education in Batu Putih Village can continue to increase. This will not only bring direct benefits to the women involved, but will also have a positive impact on society as a whole. With more and more educated women, there will be more contributions that can be

made to society, both in the economic, social, and cultural fields.

Overall, changing public perception of women's higher education requires long-term commitment from various parties. With the right support, women in Batu Putih Village will have greater opportunities to develop themselves to the fullest, which will ultimately lead to more inclusive social and economic progress. This study has identified the main challenges faced by women in accessing higher education and provided actionable suggestions to overcome these barriers.

## CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

### Conclusion

The perception of the people of Batu Putih Village towards women's higher education is still influenced by various social, cultural, economic, and religious factors that tend to limit women's access to higher levels of education. Despite success stories that show the benefits of higher education for women, traditional views emphasizing women's domestic roles are still dominant. Therefore, more comprehensive efforts, including education on gender equality, economic empowerment, and strengthening social support, are needed to change this perception and increase women's participation in higher education.

### Suggestion

To increase women's access to higher education in Batu Putih Village, it is recommended to integrate education on gender equality and family economic empowerment in community programs, as well as expand access to women-only scholarships. Support from religious leaders and community leaders is also very important in changing traditional perceptions that limit women, while strengthening the role of women who have been successful can be used as inspiration for the younger generation. Additionally, it is important to ensure that each program is monitored and evaluated regularly to achieve optimal results.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Amalia, R., & Susanto, T. (2020). Public perception of women's higher education

in rural areas. *Journal of Education and Culture*, 25(3), 45-58.

Baker, P., & Thompson, J. (2024). The impact of cultural beliefs on women's education in Sub-Saharan Africa. *Journal of African Studies*, 37(1), 67-82.

Brown, A., & Miller, K. (2020). Gender perceptions and higher education: A study in developing countries. *International Journal of Gender Studies*, 17(2), 45-61.

Chen, L., & Wang, Y. (2022). Socio-cultural influences on women's pursuit of higher education in Asia. *Asian Journal of Education and Development*, 19(3), 45-60.

Davis, S., & Williams, E. (2021). Barriers to higher education for women in rural communities. *Global Journal of Educational Research*, 28(1), 98-114.

Dewi, E. S., & Nugraheni, S. (2024). The influence of education policy on women's access to higher education in Indonesia. *Journal of National Education Policy*, 20(2), 102-116.

Garcia, F., & Lopez, C. (2019). The challenges of higher education for women in traditional societies. *Global Gender Studies Journal*, 22(4), 102-118.

Indrawati, I., & Santoso, P. (2021). The influence of the social environment on women's education choices in villages. *Journal of Social Research*, 28(4), 76-90.

Martinez, M., & Rodriguez, S. (2023). Education, gender, and rural development: The case of Latin American women. *International Journal of Development Studies*, 30(2), 33-47.

Patel, R., & Singh, A. (2018). The role of family support in women's higher education in rural areas. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 25(3), 89-102.

- Putri, M. L., & Aisyah, N. (2018). Women's higher education: Between ideals and realities in the countryside. *Journal of Educational Policy and Management*, 22(3), 98-110.
- Ramadhani, S., & Wahyuni, A. (2022). A study on the role of the family in women's education in rural areas. *Journal of Indonesia Education*, 31(2), 34-50.
- Sari, D. P., & Nugroho, A. (2019). Factors influencing women's participation in higher education. *Journal of Social and Cultural Affairs*, 16(2), 112-123.
- Smith, J., & Johnson, L. (2019). Women's access to higher education in rural areas: A global perspective. *Journal of Education and Society*, 34(4), 198-212.
- Widodo, S., & Kartika, H. (2018). Challenges and opportunities for women in accessing higher education in rural areas. *Journal of Education and Development*, 15(3), 77-89.
- Yuliana, R., & Setiawan, R. (2023). Gender perception in higher education in Indonesia: A case study in a remote village. *Journal of Gender and Society*, 19(1), 45-59.